

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 21444

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, FR, UR
SUBJECT: SOCIALIST VIEWS OF RECENT PS/CPSU TALKS

REF: PARIS 20115 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. IN WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF JULY 20, PS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY ROBERT PONTILLON OFFERED SOCIALIST IMPRESSIONS OF JULY 6-8 MOSCOW COLLOQUIUM ON "THE WORLD CRISIS OF CAPITALISM", AND DISCUSSED HIS MEETINGS WITH ZAGLADIN AND PONOMAREV. PONTILLON FOUND THE SOVIET ECONOMISTS, HEADED BY MOSCOW INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMICS PRESIDENT INOZEMTZEV, "MORE NUANCED" THAN THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS IN THEIR ANALYSIS OF THE WESTERN ECONOMIC CRISIS, HIGHLY CONCERNED TO PROTECT THEIR "PRIVILEGED CONTACTS" WITH WESTERN MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND PUSHING HARD TO MAKE THEIR PS GUESTS BELIEVE IN THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO DETENTE. SURPRISING TO THE FRENCH SIDE WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS CLAIMED TO SEEK A ROLE FOR THE SOVIET UNION IN

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"THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER" AND

EXPRESSED INTEREST IN CLOSER TIES WITH THE GROUP OF 77. THE PS WAS ALSO SURPRISED AT SOVIET REFUSAL TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON THE SINCERITY OF THEIR INTEREST IN DETENTE WHEN TESTED AGAINST CURRENT SOVIET TROOP DISPOSITIONS. PONTILLON CLOSED BY NOTING THAT THE PARTY WAS PLEASED AT WHAT IT TOOK TO BE SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE UNION OF THE LEFT AS A POSSIBLE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO GISCARD. END SUMMARY.

1. THE COLLOQUIUM: SINCE LAST APRIL THE PS AND THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE ON THE DESIRABILITY OF HOLDING A JOINT COLLOQUIUM ON THE "WESTERN ECONOMIC CRISIS" AND ITS RELATION TO WHAT EUROPEAN MARXISTS CALL THE WORLD CRISIS OF CAPITALISM. THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED LEFT SINCE THE PCF HAS CLAIMED THAT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES OF THE WEST REPRESENT "CAPITALISM'S FINAL CRISIS." THEREFORE, IN THE PCF'S VIEW, EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES FROM THE LEFT ARE IN ORDER. MORE STABLE AND LESS ALARMIST, THE PS HAS LONG WANTED TO COUNTER THIS VIEW BY GETTING A SOVIET IMPRIMATUR ON ITS OWN VIEWS. THUS IN EARLY MAY PONTILLON ASKED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN PARIS TO ASCERTAIN MOSCOW INTEREST IN HOLDING THE COLLOQUIUM. A FEW DAYS LATER, HE SAYS, THE PS WAS INVITED TO THE COLLOQUIUM BY ECONOMIST INOZEMTZEV.

2. THE PARTICIPANTS: IN ADDITION TO PONTILLON, THE PS DELEGATION INCLUDED MICHEL ROCARD, NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, JACQUES ATTALI AND CHRISTIAN GOUX (MITTERRAND'S PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ADVISORS) AND PIERRE BEREGOVY, PS NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR LABOR MATTERS. ROCARD, GOUX AND ATTALI, AS THE PRINCIPAL TECHNICAL ECONOMISTS OF THE PS MAJORITY, WERE PRESUMABLY ACCOMPANIED BY THE TWO POLITICAL SPECIALISTS IN ORDER TO GIVE THE DELEGATION THE PROPER POLITICAL TONE. ASKED ABOUT THEIR SOVIET OPPOSITE NUMBERS, PONTILLON SAID THE PS DELEGATION FOUND THE YOUNG ECONOMISTS OF THE MOSCOW INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMICS LESS DOGMATIC AND FAR MORE OPEN THAN THE USUAL CPSU APPARATCHIKS. MOST IMPRESSIVE TO PONTILLON (AND, HE CLAIMS, TO ROCARD AND ATTALI) WAS INOZEMETZEV, TO WHOM ALL THE OTHER SOVIET ECONOMISTS

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DEFERRED ON ANY QUESTION INVOLVING A POLITICAL SOLUTION. INOZEMTZEV WAS CLEARLY IN CHARGE OF THE SOVIET SIDE, WAS EASILY THE MOST CAPABLE OF THE SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS AND SEEMED TO HAVE THE RESPECT OF BOTH PONOMAREV AND ZAGLADIN.

3. SOVIET MAIN THEMES -- THE COLLOQUIUM: PONTILLON STATES THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WANTED TO CONCENTRATE ITS

ANALYSIS ON THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WESTERN
ECONOMIC CRISIS. WHEN THE PS ECONOMISTS EXPRESSED SOME
RELUCTANCE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS FROM FIGURES WHICH HAD
NOT BEEN AGREED, THE SOVIETS PROPOSED TO PUT TECHNICAL
MATTERS INTO THE HANDS OF BILATERAL TEAMS -- AND THEN
PROCEEDED TO GIVE THE POLITICAL INTERPRETATION WHICH

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PONTILLON ASSUMES WAS THE OBJECT OF THE SOVIET EXERCISE.
FOR INOZEMTZEV, THE MAJOR EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS OF
CAPITALISM HAVE BEEN

- AN INCREASED TENDENCY TO MILITARY SPENDING IN
THE WEST;
- A CORRESPONDING INCREASED NEED FOR DIRECT
COMMITMENT TO DETENTE;
- A LACK OF "REALISM" ON THE PART OF SOME (NOT
NAMED) WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES;
- A DEMONSTRATION OF THE INEFFICIENCY OF CAPITA-

LIST PRICE AND WAGE MECHANISMS.
IN SPITE OF THESE INDICATIONS, HOWEVER, PONTILLON NOTED
THAT INOZEMTZEV HAD BEEN AT GREAT PAINS TO

- TAKE ISSUE WITH THE PCF NOTION THAT THIS IS
THE FINAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM;
- STRESS THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE SOVIET UNION
ATTACHES TO ITS "GOOD RELATIONS" WITH WESTERN
MNC'S;

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- MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON THE
EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

4. SOCIALIST CONCERNS -- DEFENSE MATTERS: PONTILLON
REPORTS THAT A PARTICULARLY ACRIMONIOUS MOMENT IN THE
COLLOQUIUM CAME WHEN HE AND ROCARD ASKED INOZEMTZEV
ABOUT THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO DETENTE. HOW, THE SOCIA-
LISTS WONDERED, COULD THE SOVIETS TALK ABOUT A NEED FOR
INCREASED COMMITMENT TO DETENTE WHEN SOVIET MILITARY
BUILDUP "ON THE FRONTIERS OF THE WEST" IS A CONTINUING
FACTOR IN ALL WESTERN MILITARY THINKING. INOZEMTZEV
ALLEGEDLY RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIET MILITARY BUDGET HAD
BEEN STABLE FOR FIVE YEARS WHILE THE WESTERN COUNTRIES
HAD BEEN INCREASING THEIR OWN BUDGETS. WHEN ROCARD AND
ATTALI POINTED OUT THAT RAW DEFENSE BUDGETS WERE NOT
USEFUL GUIDES TO REAL DEFENSE SPENDING, INOZEMTZEV
REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE ANY FURTHER -- AND SUGGESTED
THAT THE MEETING TAKE UP INSTEAD PROBLEMS OF WESTERN/
SOVIET ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

5. MEETING WITH PONOMAREV -- THE CPSU PITCH ON DETENTE:
INVITED TO LUNCH ON JULY 7 BY PONOMAREV, PONTILLON SAYS
HE FOUND HIMSELF THE CAPTIVE AUDIENCE FOR A RAMBLING
2 AND A 1/2 HOUR MONOLOGUE BY THE SOVIET IDEOLOGUE,
PONOMAREV'S MAIN POINTS WERE THAT

- FRANCE, OF ALL THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, IS THE
MOST CYNICAL ABOUT THE SINCERITY OF THE SOVIET
COMMITMENT TO DETENTE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN,
IN EUROPE AND IN THE INDIAN OCEAN;
- RECENT STATEMENTS BY GISCARD AND FRENCH CHIEF
OF STAFF MERY ARE THE INDEX OF FRENCH SUSPI-
CION AS GISCARD HUNTS FOR A PRETEXT TO TAKE
FRANCE BACK INTO NATO. PONTILLON ADDED THAT
MANY OF HIS SOVIET CONTACTS EXPRESSED FEAR THAT
GISCARD'S EUROPEANISM MIGHT LEAD HIM TO BEGIN
THINKING IN TERMS OF A EUROPEAN ARMY;
- THE CRITICAL SOVIET PRIORITIES IN YEARS TO COME
WILL BE LAND RECLAMATION IN THE SIBERIAN TUNDRA
AND IN THE "SOUTHERN STATES." THESE PROJECTS
WILL REQUIRE THE FUNDS WHICH ARE NOW BEING

SPENT FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AND IT IS FOR THIS
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REASON THAT THE SOVIETS FEEL THEIR COMMITMENT
TO DETENTE SHOULD BE GIVEN CREDENCE;
-- ALL LEFT MOVEMENTS EVERYWHERE SHOULD IMITATE
THE CPSU, WHICH HAS RECENTLY BECOME FAR MORE
SELECTIVE IN GRANTING PARTY MEMBERSHIP.
PONTILLON INTERPRETS THIS TO BE PONOMAREV'S
WARNING AGAINST ANY TENDENCY ON THE PART OF
THE PS TO BECOME A "CATCH-ALL" PARTY MODELED
ON THE FRG'S SPD;
-- THE SOVIET UNION WANTS TO BE AN ACTIVE PAR-
TICIPANT IN THE CREATION OF A NEW WORLD ECON-
OMIC ORDER. IN PARTICULAR, THE CPSU WOULD
LIKE TO SEE CLOSER TIES BETWEEN ITSELF AND
THE GROUP OF 77.

6. MEETING WITH ZAGLADIN -- DETENTE AND COOPERATION:
PONTILLON ALSO HAD LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH ZAGLADIN,
WHO REITERATED HIS PATRON'S CONCERN FOR DETENTE, WHO
STRESSED THE CPSU'S DETERMINATION TO FORGE CLOSER
LINKS WITH THE GROUP OF 77 AND WHO NOTED THAT BREZHNEV
HAD TOLD THE POLITBURO THE CPSU HAD NO FURTHER ADVAN-
TAGES TO GAIN IN MULTILATERAL CONFERENCES LIKE THE
RECENTLY-ENDED ECPC IN BERLIN. IN FACT, ZAGLADIN CON-
TINUED, THE FUTURE OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH OTHER

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"PROGRESSIST" PARTIES WOULD BE THROUGH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND "COMMON ANALYSES OF SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST." ZAGLADIN NOTED THAT THE VAST SET OF PROJECTS WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WANTS TO UNDERTAKE WILL REQUIRE THE CREDITS NOW BEING SPENT ON MILITARY MATTERS AND THE FULL ECONOMIC COOPERATION OF THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES. THAT, HE CONCLUDED, WAS THE REAL MEANING OF DETENTE AND "AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN OUR (THE CPSU'S) ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT FRENCH GOVERNMENT."

7. PONTILLON'S SUMMARY IMPRESSIONS: PONTILLON SAYS HE CAME AWAY FROM MOSCOW "RELATIVELY CONVINCED" THAT SOVIET ENCHANTMENT WITH GISCARD IS PALING. AFTER THE GISCARD/MERY DECLARATIONS -- WHICH PONTILLON SAYS THE PS INTERPRETED AS BEING NOTHING MORE THAN A RESTATEMENT OF WHAT HAS BEEN GOF POLICY SINCE DE GAULLE -- AND AFTER EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE GOF ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, MOST OF THE SOVIET LEADERS WHO SPOKE WITH PONTILLON ARE SAID TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE EXPRESSED SOME VARIANT OF THE THOUGHT THAT GISCARD CANNOT BE TRUSTED. PONTILLON'S CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS SET OF SUSPICIONS IS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE FAR MORE WILLING NOW THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST TO SEE A LEFT VICTORY IN FRANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, PONTILLON SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY THE EXTENT OF SOVIET ORTHODOXY ON DEFENSE MATTERS. HE TWICE OFFERED THE THOUGHT THAT THE CPSU HAD BECOME MORE GAULLIST THAN THE FRENCH UDR, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN GENUINELY SURPRISED AT SOVIET UNRESPONSIVENESS TO ANY DISCUSSION OF THE REASONS FOR SOVIET TROOP CONCENTRATIONS IN THE WEST AND NOTED WITH SOME SURPRISE THAT SOME SOVIETS HAD DRAWN PARALLELS BETWEEN UNREST IN THE FRENCH ARMY IN THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS AND "THE POTENTIAL FOR REVOLUTION" WHICH THE CPSU NOW CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN IN THE FRENCH

EVENTS OF 1968. AND IT WAS WITH AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF SURPRISE -- OR SO PONTILLON, NOT KNOWN FOR HIS NAIVETE, CLAIMS -- THAT THE SOCIALISTS RECEIVED THE CPSU INVITATION TO ISSUE A JOINT COMMUNIQUE AFTER THE ECONOMIC MEETINGS. WHEN THE PS DELEGATION SAID THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED TO AGREE TO SUCH A DECLARATION, PONTILLON SAYS THAT ITS SOVIET HOSTS "SUGGESTED" THAT THEY ISSUE SIMULTANEOUS BUT SEPARATE ONES. THE PS RESPONSE THAT THE DELEGATION WAS ONLY IN MOSCOW FOR A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION, PONTILLON SAYS, STRUCK THE SOVIETS AS NAIVE. THE SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THAT MOSCOW WOULD HAVE WELCOMED A CHANCE TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY OUT OF THE MEETINGS.

8. COMMENT: THE PS WENT TO MOSCOW LOOKING FOR AMMUNITION IN ITS CONTINUING IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE WITH THE PCF. IT CAME AWAY FROM MOSCOW WITH THE CONVICTION THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS PREPARED TO TAKE A REASONED VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS WHICH MORE ACCURATELY REFLECT SOVIET STATE INTERESTS THAN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY. THAT REASONED VIEW IS NOT INIMICAL TO THE PS. STILL MORE IMPORTANT SEEMS TO BE THE PS IMPRESSION, TO THE EXTENT THAT ONE CAN BELIEVE PONTILLON'S VERSION OF HIS CONTACTS, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOW WILLING TO TREAT THE SOCIALISTS AS A POSSIBLE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO GISCARD. THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE SOVIETS WANTED TO DISCUSS -- DETENTE, ECONOMIC COOPERATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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TIES TO THE THIRD WORLD -- SEEM TO HAVE INDICATED TO THE PS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE TREATING THEM WITH MORE RESPECT, AS DID THE FACT THAT PONOMAREV WISHED THE UNITED LEFT SUCCESS IN THE UPCOMING MUNICIPZ FLEPUQUBUT # THE PS

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IS REACTING TO THE MOSCOW EXPERIENCE WITH CAUTION. CONTRARY TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, THE SOCIALISTS ARE DOING NO PRIVATE TRUMPETING. INSTEAD, PONTILON HAS TAKEN THE UNUSUAL STEP OF DEFERRING PUBLIC COMMENT UNTIL BOTH THE PARTY'S EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTING COMMITTEES HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS. THE PSIS, FOR THE MOMENT, AT A LOSS TO INTERPRET SOVIET INTENTIONS. WHILE NOT EXCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT MOSCOW MAY BE PREPARING TO HEDGE THE BET IT MADE WHEN THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR CALLED ON GISCARD IN MID-PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN 1974, THE PS IS WATCHING THE SOVIETS WITH A CAUTIOUS EYE, WONDERING WHAT OTHER REASONING MIGHT HAVE MOTIVATED THE SHOW OF WARMTH.

9. IN OUR OWN VIEW, MOSCOW'S APPARENT WARMTH TO PS WISHES TENDS TO CONFIRM REFTTEL THAT SOVIETS MAY BE BEGINNING TO POSITION THEMSELVES BETWEEN GISCARD AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE UNION OF THE LEFT IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN THE PROSPECTS OF THE UNITED LEFT.

10. A SEPARATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN ATTALI AND LABATT IS BEING SENT SEPTTEL TO UNDERLINE THE CORROBORATIVE NATURE OF THE TWO PS VIEWS.
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